

Stress: Ugly Duckling or Beautiful Swan?

By Vicki Biscay

Stress is an adaptive response of the body to positive and negative events. We survive, generation after generation, because of this instinctive gearing up for the "fight or flight" from potential threats. Biochemical reactions to stress may temporarily increase physical strength, make the visual unfolding of an event appear to be in slow motion, or dramatically increase blood pressure and alertness. Without these responses we might not react in time to the oncoming car in our lane, a fire in our home, an aggressive person, or any of a myriad of situations. Furthermore, a lack of stress would rob life of the ups and downs, which give life its substance and its meaning.

Behold the **Beautiful Swan** -- the one who throws us the life ring in turbulent waters and invites us to see the beauty in the calm that follows.

The rest of life isn't always characterized by one significant emergency after another but, rather, stresses that go on and on. Work deadlines approach at the speed of light. Your teenaged child questions

your knowledge, guidance, and the right to exist on the same planet. Your partner is irritable and uncommunicative. Your "Daily To Do List" couldn't be done this week, next week, or by the end of the millennium. Dad lives alone and has begun forgetting things like breakfast, taking his heart medications, and your name. You have a doctor's appointment to check a lump in your breast. Life may be your game but stress is your middle name.

Whew! Your medical checkup reveals the lump to be small and benign. Your relief is fleeting then gone altogether when the doctor tells you that your blood pressure is off the charts. You likely have hypertension. You are scheduled for more tests next week to assess whether there is evidence of heart disease and you should get the results of your blood tests at that time. You leave with a



prescription for antidepressants although you hardly remember discussing your mental state of being.

It is 9:30 p.m. and you finally sit down with your glass of wine.

The little voice inside is growing louder. "You've been drinking too much wine, too often, haven't you?" You tell the voice to hush, explaining that you need the wine to relax. You whisper back "I'll drink less as soon as I have less stress in my life. This can't go on forever, like this." That's what you tell the little voice and you believe every word of it.

Say hello to the **Ugly Duckling** of stress.

A global study of 30,000 consumers in 30 countries revealed that more women than men feel "super-stressed," according to a recent Roper Reports Worldwide survey. The highest level of stress reported was by separated or divorced women, with 28% feeling daily stress. This percentage exceeded stress reported by similarly situated men by a margin of nearly 3-2. Among employed consumers, women consistently reported more stress than men in all categories including executive/professional (23% women versus 19% men), white collar (21% vs. 16%) and blue collar (24% vs. 17%).

Nearly one in four (24%) full-time working mothers with children under the age of 13 reported feeling stress almost every day. Tom Miller, group senior vice president of Roper Starch Worldwide and director of the global consumer study said, "Whether being a working mother of young children is inherently the issue, or whether it is a matter of living up to societal or cultural expectations, the world needs to develop stress-busters to ease the lives of these women."

A 1996 report (Stress Research Reports No 268, Stockholm 1996. ISSN 0280-2783) outlined study results of about 300 women with coronary heart disease (CHD) and the same number of age-matched

healthy women. Stress from the work domain appeared to be an important risk factor for heart disease and, at least as important, was stress from family and other relationships.

The most pronounced difference between healthy women and women with CHD was noted in smaller opportunities for leisure and recreation for the CHD women. "All work and no play" not only makes Jack a dull boy (or maybe Jill a dull girl) but also may contribute to coronary heart disease in women. (This study did not include men).

Doris Curran, author of "Stress and the Healthy Family," asked 450 men and women about stress and its causes. Husbands and wives identified economics, finances and budgeting as the top stressors; however, beyond that there was clear disagreement. Husbands more often mentioned difficulty in communicating with children, over-scheduled family calendars, unhappiness with their work situation, and television. Wives more often mentioned lack of shared responsibilities in the family, house-keeping standards, guilt about not accomplishing more and self-image or self-esteem.

And then there is **Workplace Stress**.

European and Japanese scientists are far ahead of the United States in looking at workplace stress and its effect on workers' health. In Norway, government officials can be called in to investigate complaints about employees forced to work too repetitive a job or to work too fast. Japan has recognized work stress as an occupational hazard for more than two decades and has a word that means "death from overwork" (karoshi). A Japanese court, early this year, awarded money to the family of a machine shop worker who hanged himself in 1985 after working 80-hour weeks. Germany has introduced "health circles" to some organizations where employees talk about sources of job stress and come up with solutions.

The International Labor Organization estimates that work stress costs employers more than \$200 billion a year.

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Domestic Violence Awareness Training Presents the Survivor's Perspective to Over 100 Attendees



Norm Nickle, MSW, of Hoy & Nickle Associates in Olympia, was the featured speaker at a domestic violence awareness training October 26, 1999 entitled, "Domestic Violence: Symptoms, Warning Signs, and What to Do." Over 100 people attended the workshop, which was sponsored by ICSEW and the Department of Health's ICSEW Core Group. The workshop was written from a survivor's perspective, illustrating how domestic violence can be physical, sexual and/or emotional, what to look for in abusers, and how the workplace can help.

Nickle's presentation addressed common myths and stereotypes, the statistics that support that women are in the greatest danger when trying to leave violent relationships, and the barriers that force them to stay. His

presentation focused on holding abusers accountable rather than blaming victims. Nickle also said that the vast majority of the men he counsels grew up in a violent home where they either witnessed abuse or were abused themselves, but that only one in three becomes a batterer, which illustrates the point that violence is a choice. Nickle also stated that only 15% of the male population batters, which shows that the majority of men do not batter.

Other presenters included Dick Van Wagenen, Governor's Executive Policy Staff, who presented current statistics on domestic violence, as well as Governor Locke's commitment to ending domestic violence in our society; Lillian Bensley, from the Department of Health, who presented the activities and survey done by the Family Violence Work Group; Dee Koester, from Safeplace, who gave an overview on physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; and Kathy Andruss, DOH Training Manager, who gave a presentation on workplace responsibility and what we can all do.

**Washington State
Domestic Violence
Hotline
1-800-562-6025**

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Cancer Claims Former ICSEW Chair

By Valerie Gerst

A former ICSEW chair, Kathy Willis died on August 28 from cancer. She was 47. Kathy chaired ICSEW from 1989 - 1991. The plaque she received at the end of her tenure was always proudly displayed on her office wall.

Kathy was at the November 10, 1998 general membership meeting as part of a panel of past ICSEW chairs. She mentioned that during her tenure the two big issues they dealt with were childcare and affirmative action. She said she learned to take these big issues and break them down into more manageable pieces. Once each piece is completed, you can see progress toward the larger picture. She also talked with us about making sure to keep a balance in our lives between work and home to help alleviate stress.

Kathy also strongly supported mentoring programs at our agencies. Her mentor at Labor & Industries gave her good advice to continue her career at L&I because he felt there were places she could go in the organization. And, she lived her vision because she was a role model and mentor to many people at Labor and Industries.

Kathy started as a Clerk 1 at Labor and Industries 27 years ago. She worked her way up to Assistant



Kathy Willis

Director for Administrative Services over 367 employees. She was a true success story and as her mentor knew - she did go places at L&I.

Anyone who knew her, admired her. She was gracious, level-headed and approached every issue with tact and diplomacy. Employees at Labor and Industries commented that it didn't matter who you were or where you worked, she always took her time to talk with you, no matter how busy she was.

She also took her own advice to heart and balanced her life at home. She was a board member of ZONTA Club, a non-profit organization that helps disadvantaged women develop

their careers. She founded a lunch-time book and literacy club at L&I and was a longtime volunteer for the Capital City Marathon, and the Lakefair fun run. She was also a lunch buddy for the Tenino School District. And, Governor Gary Locke appointed her to serve on the state's Combined Fund Drive Committee.

The group of past ICSEW chairs that attended the general membership meeting on November 10, 1998, meets every months for dinner. In October they met for the first time without Kathy and shared their thoughts about her.

Linda Lethlean: "She was a mentor on how to be a gentle leader."

Linda Polzin: "She was someone you tried to model yourself after, but she was always a step ahead -- she just got better."

Marveen Rohr: "She embodied so many diverse qualities that included strength, leadership, compassion and more. And, she always did it with a smile."

Sadie Rodriguez-Hawkins: "By daily example, Kathy bequeathed us a legacy of love. What will we do with it? Will we share it generously or keep it to ourselves?"

Even if you never met Kathy, you can see, we were very lucky to have had her help mold ICSEW into the organization it is today.

Stress: Ugly Duckling or Beautiful Swan?

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The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has placed job stress on its national agenda but has been able to spend less than \$2 million a year on studies of job stress and related issues. NIOSH sees this issue as a major one, particularly in light of the fact that the average American workweek is the longest it has been (currently about 47 hours) in a generation. NIOSH's **entire** budget would barely pay for even one of the comprehensive studies involving tens of thousands of workers, conducted in Europe and Japan.

NIOSH and the American Psychological Association (APA) sponsored a conference in March 1999. The conference title was "Work, Stress, and Health '99: Organization of Work in a Global Economy." This important conference included collaboration from organizations in Finland, Germany, Japan, Sweden, South Africa, and the Netherlands in addition to the United States. Stress is not just a household term for us, as individuals. It is a global issue that is being examined on a global scale.

Available to anyone, upon request, is the NIOSH publication "STRESS...AT WORK." It can be requested by telephone (1-800-356-4674) or viewed on the Internet at www.cdc.gov/niosh/stresswk.html.

This NIOSH publication describes the early warning signs of job

stress: headaches, sleep disturbances, difficulty in concentrating, short temper, upset stomach, job dissatisfaction, and low morale. Many health conditions are clearly created or exacerbated by stress while others appear to have a correlation to stress levels. These include cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, psychological disorders such as depression and burnout, workplace injury, suicide, substance abuse, cancer, ulcers, and impaired immune function.

Increasing awareness by employers of the cost of stress and the benefits that can come from reorganizing work or responsibilities will likely occur as more research is conducted and as research conclusions are made known. Individual health consequences and workplace costs are too significant to ignore.

Most of us can identify some form of job stress and some of this stress can be positive. Our work, the quantity of it, and deadlines may inspire us to achieve results that satisfy us. Clearly, certain workplace stress affects individuals differently. Research shows that the greatest health risks come from jobs that pose high demands but where the worker feels he or she has little control. Workplace stress, depending on the nature of it, may be helpful or harmful.

We may benefit from examining the stressors in our lives and sorting out the Ugly Ducklings from the Beautiful Swans. We can develop a plan or individual strategies to begin turning our stress ducklings into swans so that we can begin to achieve greater health and well being.

Calendar of Events

Native American Heritage Month	November
ICSEW General Membership Meeting	November 9
Veterans' Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	November 25
Holiday for State Employees	November 26
National Drunk Driving Awareness Month	December
Hanukkah	December 4
ICSEW Executive Board Meeting	December 8
First Day of Winter	December 21
Holiday for State Employees	December 24
Christmas	December 25
Kwanzaa (Quansa)	December 26 - January 1
Holiday for State Employees	December 31
New Year's Day	January 1, 2000
ICSEW General Membership Meeting	January 11, 2000

A Teacher's Perspective

For the Love of Children

Isn't being a childcare provider just considered a glorified babysitter? My answer would definitely be "NO!" This is my seventh year as a childcare provider and I want to let you know I am not a baby-sitter. I am a teacher, nurse, mother and father, role model, and friend to all my children.

As a teacher I am required by the state to post a curriculum in my classroom that I follow. This includes activities such as language, social studies, math, science, music, and story telling. Let me back up a minute and tell you that I am a teacher to four and five-year-olds, and all I needed to get this job was a high school diploma. Now that you know that information let me take you through one of my days at work.

Let's start with breakfast. I serve breakfast to 20 children. I know this must seem like a lot of children, but my classroom ratio is one teacher to every 10 children. Once breakfast is over, my day begins with learning time. This is where all those activities come in that I told you about. It is my job to prepare your child for kindergarten, so that means I must teach them how to write their letters, spell their name, recognize shapes, count to 10, study planets, do science experiments, sing songs, read books, etc., etc., etc.

Throughout my day I am called mom or dad at least once. I ask myself, "Do I look like their parent?" The reason children call me this is because I am caring for them in a way that their mom or dad would. I am also with the children more often than their parents. I mean think about it. What do you do when you pick up your child? Go home, eat dinner, watch a little TV, then go to bed and do the same thing again the next day until Friday. This doesn't make you a bad parent, it just means that your child has a special bond with their care provider.

How often does your child get sick throughout the year? You can't take every "runny nose" day off work, so you trust that your child's teacher will make sure to give him/her their correct amount of medicine at the correct time. I remember having four children on medicine at the same time, but medicine times were all different and the amounts were different. Don't forget I take care of 20 children, so four children on medicine wasn't really

"How do you do this every day? I would go crazy." My answer is that I love children. I am not in my job for the money.

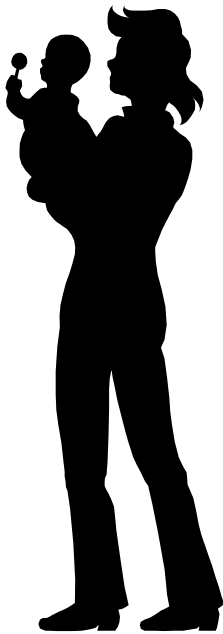
that many. I also give children with asthma their inhaler or breathing treatment. One last requirement for my job is that I be CPR/first aid certified.

I would now like to share with you a question that I am asked at least once a week by one of the parents. "How do you do this every day? I would go crazy." My answer is that I love children. I am not in my job for the money. Think about what you pay a baby sitter to watch your child for an hour. Now think about this. If I only work a 1/10 ratio then I make 71 cents per child for an hour. So where is all the money going that you pay? It's not going to the teachers. Childcare providers are paid so low they can't even afford the deduction taken out of their check each month for health care or a retirement program.

I tell you again the reason I work with children is because I love them, and I hope in one way or another I can be a positive role model for them. Even though I love children as much as I do, my job is not something I consider for a lifelong career. There is no advancement and I need something that can financially support me better. This brings great sadness to me when I have to think about leaving the children. Sometimes the week-end is even hard because on Friday one of my kids will ask me where I am going and I say "home." They then look at me with such sad eyes and tell me not to leave. I just tell them I love them and will miss them, but I'll see them on Monday and we can share what we did over the weekend.

I know it must be hard to put your child in daycare during the day. However, try to stay as active in your child's life as you can. A good way to do this is to look for day care centers that have an open door policy. This means you can visit any time you want, without calling ahead of time. Then on your lunch break, maybe go by and have lunch with your child.

It's great that so many parents get involved with their children after they enter school, but why not start earlier? Please tell your childcare provider how special they are to you. I know how I enjoy hearing that I'm doing a good job.



Are You Seeking Fame and Fortune?

Enter the ICSEW LOGO CONTEST

The year 2000 marks the 30th Anniversary of the Governor's Interagency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW). To commemorate this event, ICSEW wants to develop a new logo.

Please submit your electronic or camera-ready art to the ICSEW Executive Board by **December 30, 1999** to the address below. The winner will be recognized at the July 2000 transition meeting and receive a \$100 gift certificate.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Donna Lynch, Communications Chair, at:
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
E-mail: dlyn461@ecy.wa.gov
(360) 407-7529/(360) 407-6006 (TDD)



It's Not Just a Women's Issue

By Donna Lynch

Following the last issue of InterAct, I was contacted by a male state employee. He expressed concerns that our article on domestic violence, "Red Flags: Avoiding Abusive Relationships," presented only the female's perspective of what to look out for in a potentially abusive relationship. He brought to my attention that men, too, are abused in relationships.

We do not have accurate statistics of male battering. At present, 95% of reported cases of domestic violence are males perpetrating against females, but we are also aware that many cases of domestic violence go unreported, and that battering also occurs in same sex relationships and in adult caregiver situations.

We do not often get the opportunity to "hear the other side" so I offered this gentleman the chance to tell his story. Putting his personal experiences on paper, I believe, was difficult for him. He did provide me with some brief examples, such as:

"I was on a date. I was dancing with her and joking about something (don't remember what). I really like a good joke. Next thing I knew, she punched me on the shoulder hard enough to hurt. (*I know what you're thinking, "What a whiner!"*) I immediately commented on the punch and told her I didn't like it. She told me 'Shut up. You know you liked it.' My thoughts were, 'Excuse me? I just told you I didn't like it.' So I

knew that this was a good time to exit the relationship, before it got worse."

Because ICSEW is a women's committee, focusing on women's issues, InterAct articles will most likely be written with a focus on the female gender. We realize that many of the issues are not women's issues only, but are actually "family issues."

We would be very interested in receiving personal stories from state employed men who have been victims of domestic violence.

The InterAct also welcomes guest articles and/or suggestions on all issues facing state employees. The mailing address for InterAct is:
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Let's Talk Turkey



The turkey has a colorful and delicious history. Here are some facts about our nation's favorite bird.

Domesticated turkeys (farm-raised) cannot fly. Wild turkeys can fly for short distances.

Only male turkeys (toms) gobble. Female turkeys (hens) make a clicking noise.

More than 45 million turkeys are cooked and 525 million pounds of turkey are eaten during Thanksgiving.

‘Making Connections’ Needs Female Mentors

Would you like to be a part in making a difference in the lives of our youth? You should:

- Enjoy working with teenagers.
- Be willing to provide role modeling and support.
- Be willing to encourage students to pursue post-secondary education especially in math, science or technology related fields.
- Provide opportunities for site visits (labs, corporations, hospitals, etc.).
- Be willing to have ongoing communication.

As you may be aware, one of the obstacles to pay equity is the fact that young women (high school age or before) aren’t encouraged strongly enough to enter into fields historically dominated by men. Because young women don’t see people they can identify with in certain fields, such as math, science, technology, and law enforcement, they may not consider those fields to be career options for themselves. You can impact the life of a young woman and help her to realize the many opportunities that are available.

Carmen Goldsmith, the coordinator for the Making Connections

program, is looking for volunteers who can help with this important mission. The Making Connections program works with high school girls of color who have an interest in the fields of math, science or technology.

The program has three components:

- 1) hands-on workshops in related topics;
- 2) Next-Step workshops, which help the students navigate the academic maze of high school and college preparation; and
- 3) mentoring by women in these related fields.

Making Connections meets once a quarter on the campus of the University of Washington. The initial workshop on October 23 emphasized the importance of the mentor/student relationship, parental support and involvement. The remaining dates & times are as follows:

January 22, 2000	12:30-4:30 p.m.
April 1, 2000	12:30-4:30 p.m.
June 3, 2000	12:30-4:30 p.m.

Even if you missed the first meeting, if you are interested in becoming a mentor for a young woman, please complete the mentor application at the right or contact Carmen Goldsmith.

“Making Connections” Mentor Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Ethnicity (optional): __Asian American/Pacific Islander __African American
 __Caucasian __Hispanic American/Latino __Native American
 __Multi-racial __Other

Program of Study: _____

Department:_____ Class:_____

Would you be able to commit to a minimum of 3 hours per month for the 1999-2000 academic year? __Yes __No

What experience do you have working with a diverse group of people?

Why are you interested in being a mentor with the Making Connections program?

Please Return Application as soon as possible to:
Carmen Goldsmith, Making Connections Coordinator
University of Washington Women’s Center Phone: (206) 616-2366
Cunningham Hall, Box 351380 Fax: (206) 685-4490
Seattle, WA 98195-1380 crgold@u.washington.edu

December is Drunk Driving Awareness Month

(Editor’s Note: Some of the information in this article is reprinted from MADD -- Mothers Against Drunk Driving.)

With December being National Drunk Driving Awareness Month and the holidays soon approaching, it’s an excellent time to remind everyone that “drinking and driving don’t mix.” In Washington State, the legal limit is .08 percent blood alcohol. The new .08 limit went into effect this past July, and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission is currently doing research to show the impact of this new law.

Nationally, the number of deaths from alcohol-related crashes in 1998 decreased to its lowest level in 17 years. According to figures from the

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 15,935 alcohol-related traffic deaths in 1998, a 1.5 percent drop from 16,189 in 1997.

The effort to stop drunk driving has never been more successful than it is today. In January 1995, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, MADD and other highway safety partners set a goal to reduce U.S. alcohol-related traffic fatalities to no more than 11,000 by the year 2005.

But the obstacles to reach this goal are mighty. U.S. demographic trends indicate a second “baby boom” generation entering the high-risk 16- to 20-year-old age group in the next decade. By 2005, the youth popula-

	Washington State	U.S.
Over-all Grade	C+	C
Total Fatalities	653	41,798
Alcohol-Related Deaths	317	17,274
Percent Alcohol-Related	48.5%	41.3%
Licensed Drivers	3,741,000	175,128,000
Cost of A-R Fatalities	\$349,272,084	\$19,039,921,020
Cost of A-R Injuries	\$1,180,087,333	\$64,330,276,140

This 1996 data is from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - U.S. Department of Transportation.

tion is expected to increase by almost 14 percent. Repeat offenders and hardcore drinking drivers, already over-represented in alcohol-related fatal traffic crashes, will also continue to be one of the most difficult groups of higher risk drivers to impact.

Rating the States 2000, sponsored by MADD and the GuideOne Foundation, will help focus public attention on meeting or even exceeding the 11,000-by-2005 goal. The program has three objectives: (1) identify the strengths and weaknesses of state anti-impaired driving, underage drinking prevention and victim services programs; (2) call public

attention to the progress and shortcomings of current efforts to stop drunk driving and underage drinking, and to improve victim assistance; and (3) provide a basis for joint remedial action.

Scheduled for release this month, Rating the States 2000 will provide a springboard for many MADD programs and activities during the organization’s 20th anniversary year in 2000. This important study will empower all participants in the war against drunk driving to continue making U.S. roads safer for everyone in the new millennium.



Three Keys to Integrity

Integrity is one of those attributes that everyone likes to think they have, but aren’t really sure what it looks like in action -- particularly at work.

Basically, integrity means you do what you do for no other reason than that it’s right. Here are three key principles of integrity:

-- Stand by your convictions, even when you’re pressured to do otherwise.

-- Give others credit that is rightfully theirs. Don’t avoid those who are smarter or even more skilled than you.

-- Be honest about who you really are. That means showing your shortcomings as well as your strengths. Be yourself.

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